



R05-26-A-007

909 Davis St
Evanston, IL 60201
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NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

1. Applicant Identification

City of Evanston
909 Davis Street
Evanston, IL 60201

2. Website URL

<https://www.cityofevanston.org>

3. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

4. Location

- a. City: Evanston
- b. County: Cook
- c. State: Illinois

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- a. Target Area: Central Evanston
 - Census Tracts: 17031809200 and 17031809600
- b. Priority Sites:
 - 1919 Greenwood Street
 - 600 Oakton Street
 - Robinson Properties along Emerson Street
 - Mason Park along Church Street
 - North Mayfair Right-of-Way between Green Bay Road and Foster Street

6. Contacts

- a. Project Director
 - Name: Sarah Flax
 - Phone: (847) 448-8684
 - Email: sflax@cityofevanston.org
 - Mailing Address: City of Evanston, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201
- b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
 - Name: Mayor Daniel Biss
 - Phone: (847) 448-4311
 - Email: dbiss@cityofevanston.org
 - Mailing Address: City of Evanston, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201

7. **Population**

78,110

8. **Other Factors**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	N/A
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3, 7
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	N/A

9. **Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority**

See attached

10. **Releasing Copies of Applications**

Not applicable, the application does not include confidential, privileged, or sensitive information



ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

2520 WEST ILES AVENUE, P.O. BOX 19276, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62794-9276 • (217) 782-3397

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR

JAMES JENNINGS, ACTING DIRECTOR

217/785-8726

1/08/2026

City of Evanston
ATTN: Mayor Daniel Bliss
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

**Subject: State Acknowledgement Letter for the City of Evanston
FY2026 US EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant Application**

Dear Mayor Bliss,

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has received your request for a letter of acknowledgement for an upcoming Community Wide Assessment Grant application to U.S. EPA. City of Evanston is applying for a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment Grant.

The grant will be a Community Wide Assessment for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum.

Illinois EPA acknowledges City of Evanston's efforts to obtain federal Brownfields funds for this project. If you have any questions, I may be contacted at the above address or telephone numbers below, or at Jacob.fink@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,

Jacob Fink
Brownfield Program Administrator
Bureau of Land/Office of Site Evaluation
Office# (217) 785-8726
Cell# (217) 986-0818
Jacob.fink@illinois.gov



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1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields

a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area – Located along the shores of Lake Michigan just north of Chicago, Evanston, Illinois, is a landlocked and built-out urban community experiencing sustained development pressure. Between 2000 and 2020, Evanston’s population increased by 5.2% (from 74,239 to 78,110), even as surrounding Cook County lost more than 100,000 residents. This population growth, combined with limited available land, has intensified the City’s reliance on the redevelopment of former industrial and commercial properties to meet housing, economic development, and open space needs.

Evanston has a long industrial history tied to its proximity to rail lines, waterways, and regional markets. From the late 19th century through the post-World War II era, the community was home to rubber manufacturing, industrial paint production, metal fabrication, furniture making, textiles, machinery manufacturing, and warehousing. As these industries declined, many properties were vacated or underutilized. Today, these legacy sites are suspected of containing hazardous substances, including petroleum products, heavy metals, and industrial chemicals, which complicate redevelopment, limit investment, and pose potential risks to human health and the environment.

The Target Area for project activities encompasses Census Tracts 8092 and 8096, bounded by North Shore Channel to the north and west (Zone A floodplain), Green Bay Road, Ashland Avenue, and Asbury Avenue to the east, and Dempster Street to the south. This area includes former manufacturing and transportation-adjacent properties located near historic rail corridors that were essential to Evanston’s economy. Many parcels remain vacant or underutilized due to environmental uncertainty, creating barriers to reuse in a community with limited developable land.

Brownfield conditions within the Target Area constrain economic growth, delay housing development, and reduce opportunities to create parks and other community-serving uses. Environmental uncertainty discourages private investment and leaves properties idle in neighborhoods that could benefit from reintegration into the local economy. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding will enable the City to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, reducing uncertainty and preparing properties for remediation and reuse. By addressing contamination concerns, this grant will lay the foundation for cleanup, leverage future public and private investment, and support the transformation of underutilized properties into safe, productive uses such as housing, commercial development, and green space. These efforts will enhance environmental conditions, safeguard public health, and advance Evanston’s long-term goals for sustainable growth.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites – Evanston’s industrial legacy includes steel/aluminum processing, industrial paint and chemical production, and equipment manufacturing. For example, small-scale metal fabrication operations like General Automatic Products, Inc. manufactured steel pipe. The Evanston Rubber Company was a major producer of rubber goods. Buehler, Ltd. was a recognized leader in metallurgical equipment. Several textile mills and garment factories also operated in the area. Much of this activity occurred in Census Tracts 8092 and 8096, where the City’s historic industrial and transportation infrastructure intersect with residential neighborhoods and community-serving amenities. As these industries declined, many sites were abandoned or converted to low-intensity uses, leaving behind suspected contamination that continues to impede reinvestment.

In addition to former manufacturing sites, historic railroad corridors are a defining feature of the Target Area. Today, former and abandoned railroad rights-of-way present both environmental challenges and significant opportunities for redevelopment, neighborhood connectivity, and community benefit.

The City has identified 11 brownfield sites for assessment activities and has prioritized a subset of catalytic sites based on their proximity to residential neighborhoods, known or suspected contamination, community-identified reuse potential, public ownership or site access readiness, and their ability to advance affordable housing, parks, and neighborhood connectivity. Catalytic brownfields include:

- 1919 Greenwood Street – This 2.1-acre former railroad right-of-way is located adjacent to housing and just off a major thoroughfare. The site is currently used for storage of abandoned vehicles, equipment, scrap materials, and other debris. Anticipated contaminants include lead, cadmium, chromium, arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), solvents, and petroleum products. Due to its size, location, and surrounding land uses, this site presents a strong opportunity for affordable housing development once environmental conditions are fully characterized.
- 600 Oakton Street – A dry cleaner operates at this 0.3-acre site, surrounded by a residential neighborhood and railroad tracks. The property was also the home of a former auto repair shop. A local businessman is interested in purchasing the property but is concerned with potential contaminants, which may include perchloroethylene, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and heavy metals.
- Robinson Properties – Located along Emerson Street, this 4.7-acre property is currently used for off-street bus

parking. The parcel sits atop a former railroad right-of-way and is adjacent to a Commonwealth Edison electric substation. The site is surrounded by residential housing and has major development potential as a gateway to Evanston. Potential pollution includes heavy metals, PCBs, and petroleum. Environmental assessment will support planning for redevelopment that better integrates this underutilized site into the surrounding community.

- **Mason Park** – This public recreation area, spanning 5.2 acres along Church Street, serves residents in Census Tracts 8092 and 8096. The park is situated on a former railroad right-of-way and may contain contamination from lead, cadmium, chromium, arsenic, PCBs, and petroleum. Extensive community engagement has identified strong support for expanding the park south along the former Mayfair Cutoff to create new trails, public gathering spaces, and an at-grade pedestrian and bicycle connection, improving access to Evanston Township High School.
- **North Mayfair Right-of-Way** – The 5.5-acre Mayfair Cutoff is an abandoned railroad embankment built in 1889 to bypass the Chicago & North Western main line. Historically, the Mayfair Cutoff acted as a racial and economic divide between the western and eastern portions of Evanston’s 5th Ward (Census Tract 8092), creating a physical barrier between neighborhoods. In 2022, Evanston began planning to redevelop the Mayfair Cutoff as a community connector with paths, play areas, gathering spaces, and other amenities. As a former railroad right-of-way, potential contaminants include heavy metals, PCBs, and petroleum.

Assessment activities at these priority sites will reduce environmental uncertainty, support cleanup planning, and position the City to pursue remediation funding and redevelopment partnerships. Together, these sites represent Evanston’s most immediate and impactful opportunities to address legacy contamination while advancing affordable housing, public space, mobility, and revitalization within the Target Area.

c. Identifying Additional Sites – Evanston will develop a transparent process to identify additional sites with a Steering Committee comprised of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, aligning assessment activities with public health protection and neighborhood revitalization goals. The Steering Committee will guide site identification and prioritization and ensure that community perspectives meaningfully inform decision-making. Public meetings and outreach activities will be conducted to educate residents about brownfields and to solicit nominations of properties suspected of contamination. Candidate sites will undergo an initial screening and be evaluated using clear prioritization criteria, including: redevelopment potential; protection of public health; proximity to sensitive populations; demonstrated community support; capacity to spur additional neighborhood revitalization; job creation potential; feasibility of negotiating site access with property owners; readiness for assessment; and the likelihood of leveraging additional State, federal, or private resources for cleanup and reuse. All identified sites will be documented in a brownfield inventory.

Revitalization of the Target Area

d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans – The reuse of brownfield sites is a central component of Evanston’s long-term revitalization strategy and directly supports the City’s goal of becoming the “Most Livable City in America.” Because Evanston’s downtown core and many residential neighborhoods are largely built out, future growth depends on the productive reuse of vacant and underutilized industrial properties. The City’s reuse strategy emphasizes a mix of affordable and mixed-income housing, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and parks and green space, particularly within Census Tracts 8092 and 8096.

Expanding affordable housing options is one of the City Council’s top priorities in its *Strategic Plan*. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, Evanston residents spend approximately 32% of household income on housing, exceeding the recommended affordability threshold of 30%. At the same time, the City lacks “missing middle” housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small-scale multi-family buildings. Several priority brownfields identified in this application – such as **1919 Greenwood Street and Robinson Properties** – present opportunities to address these needs through housing development once cleanup pathways are defined.

EPA Brownfields Assessment resources complement the draft recommendations of the *Envision Evanston 2045* comprehensive plan. The plan encourages the reuse of brownfields for mixed-use development. Brownfields revitalization also aligns with the *Downtown Evanston Plan*, which promotes affordable rental and for-purchase housing for a wide range of incomes, age groups, and mobility levels.

The City has demonstrated its commitment to revitalization through the adoption of a GIS-based inventory of properties with potential environmental hazards. All priority sites included in this application are listed in the City’s inventory.

Reuse strategies have been shaped through extensive community engagement. Planning efforts for **Mason Park and the Mayfair Cutoff** included surveys, public meetings, and stakeholder input that informed conceptual designs prepared by landscape architects. These concepts include expanded recreational amenities, community gardens, and a pedestrian and bicycle trail providing a safe, at-grade connection to Evanston Township High School. These projects

aim to reconnect neighborhoods historically divided by railroad infrastructure while improving access to green space. By reducing environmental uncertainty through site assessments and cleanup planning, this grant will enable Evanston to advance redevelopment that is consistent with adopted plans, responsive to community priorities, and capable of delivering long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits within the Target Area.

e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy – The reuse of brownfield sites within Census Tracts 8092 and 8096 will deliver measurable economic, environmental, and community benefits following site assessment and cleanup. By reducing environmental uncertainty and preparing sites for remediation and redevelopment, EPA Brownfields resources will enable outcomes that directly support Evanston’s growth and resilience goals.

A primary outcome of brownfields reuse in the Target Area is the creation of affordable and mixed-income housing, addressing one of the Evanston City Council’s highest priorities. Several priority sites, including 1919 Greenwood Street and the Robinson Properties, offer opportunities for redevelopment into “missing middle” housing such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and courtyard apartments. These housing types expand affordability options for low- and moderate-income households, increase density without compromising walkability or neighborhood character, and are generally more energy-efficient than large multi-family buildings. Redevelopment of these sites is expected to stimulate private investment, expand the local tax base, and support job creation.

Brownfields reuse will also facilitate the expansion of community-serving green space and active transportation infrastructure. At Mason Park and along the Mayfair Cutoff, assessment and cleanup will enable the expansion of recreational amenities, community gardens, and a pedestrian-bicycle trail providing a safe, at-grade connection to Evanston Township High School. These improvements will reconnect neighborhoods historically divided by railroad infrastructure, increase access to parks for nearby residents, and promote physical activity and public health.

The proposed reuse strategy will also improve local resilience to extreme weather events and natural disasters, consistent with Evanston’s 2018 [Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#). Redevelopment of contaminated sites supports smart growth by concentrating development in urbanized areas, reducing vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions. New housing and public spaces can incorporate energy-efficient design and green infrastructure that help mitigate heat, manage stormwater, and reduce flood risk. These benefits are significant for low-income communities, which are more vulnerable to environmental and climate-related health impacts.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse – Evanston has extensive experience leveraging federal dollars with public and private resources. State and federal brownfields cleanup resources will help to support remediation of assessed sites. Key funding that has been committed, secured, and anticipated includes:

Source	Purpose	Status	Amount
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds	Revitalization in project area	Committed	\$2 million
Illinois cleanup grants	Remediation of assessed sites	Anticipated	\$5 million
EPA cleanup grants	Remediation of assessed sites	Anticipated	\$5 million
National Park Service recreational investment	Expansion of Mason Park	Pursuing	\$5 million
Tax increment financing (TIF) and private investment	Evanston business growth	Expected	\$5 million

g. Use of Existing Infrastructure – Reuse of priority brownfield sites in Evanston will leverage existing municipal infrastructure. The priority sites identified in Census Tracts 8092 and 8096 are located in established neighborhoods that are already served by paved roadways, public water and sewer systems, electric and natural gas utilities, and public transit, minimizing the need for major new infrastructure investments.

Several priority sites, including 1919 Greenwood Street and Robinson Properties, are located along arterial streets and existing utility corridors, making them well-suited for residential redevelopment. Access to existing infrastructure will reduce construction costs, limit disruption to surrounding neighborhoods, and support compact development patterns.

Public infrastructure also supports the reuse of sites intended for community-serving and recreational purposes. Mason Park and the Mayfair Cutoff are situated within Evanston’s existing parks, trail, and sidewalk network and are adjacent to schools, residential neighborhoods, and transit routes. Planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements will build upon existing infrastructure to improve connectivity, expand access to green space, and enhance safe, non-motorized transportation options without the need for extensive new roadway or utility construction.

Any minor infrastructure upgrades needed to support site reuse – such as trail surface improvements, lighting, or drainage enhancements – will be coordinated with the City’s capital improvement planning. By maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, Evanston’s brownfields reuse strategy supports smart growth, reduces environmental impacts, and accelerates redevelopment outcomes consistent with adopted local plans.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need

a. The Community’s Need for Funding – The development sector in Evanston has a limited ability to conduct environmental assessments and prepare sites for reuse due to a combination of economic and risk factors. The environmental conditions of the prioritized sites are currently not fully understood, making it challenging to predict remediation costs and undermining project feasibility. Brownfield projects also tend to have longer timelines due to regulatory approvals and cleanup activities, resulting in higher carrying costs and delayed returns.

At the municipal level, Evanston faces fiscal constraints that limit its capacity to self-fund brownfields assessment. A significant portion of Evanston is occupied by Northwestern University, a non-profit that does not pay property taxes. The low assessed values of land in Census Tracts 8092 and 8096, due to brownfield contamination, also limit Evanston’s tax revenues. The City has been forced to tap into its reserves to meet existing needs and legally mandated obligations, including addressing a substantial public pension shortfall, replacing aging public infrastructure, and implementing a citywide lead service line replacement program to protect drinking water quality. These commitments have significantly reduced discretionary funds available for environmental assessment and planning activities.

Without federal assistance, Evanston lacks the financial capacity to assess contaminated properties and reduce uncertainty that deters redevelopment. The private sector is unwilling to invest in sites with unknown contamination risks, particularly in neighborhoods where affordability challenges already constrain market conditions. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding is critical to unlocking reinvestment that would otherwise not occur.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations – Census Tracts 8092 has a large population under 5 years old and Census Tract 8096 is significantly older than the national level. Women aged 15-50 years old in Census Tract 8092 also give birth at high rates. See summary table below (levels higher than state and national levels shown in red):

Vulnerable Populations	Census Tract 8092	Census Tract 8096	Illinois	United States
Children Under 5	8.2%	2.4%	5.6%	5.7%
Seniors 65 and Over	9.7%	22.2%	16.6%	16.8%
Pregnant Women (per 1,000)	68	45	50	52

Considering prior uses, Evanston expects targeted brownfields will be contaminated with lead, cadmium, chromium, arsenic, asbestos, PCBs, VOCs, solvents, and petroleum products. EPA has designated some of these substances as carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic. The existence of these contaminants poses serious concerns to sensitive populations. Contaminated sites exacerbate the risk of cancer and non-cancer mortality for nearby households, including the area’s pregnant women and infants. Contaminants of concern include:

- Lead (likely at most sites) – Children’s brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to lead’s effects. Pregnant women are also vulnerable to lead exposure, which can result in miscarriage and premature birth.
- Arsenic (likely at most sites) – Evidence suggests that inhaled or ingested inorganic arsenic can injure pregnant women and their unborn babies.
- Petroleum (likely at several sites) – Toluene has been shown to cause spontaneous abortion among pregnant women. Xylene inhaled by women can reach developing fetuses and contaminate breast milk.

Brownfields also yield negative psychological impacts as vacant sites and dilapidated areas impact surrounding neighborhoods, resulting in blight and disinvestment, reduced property values and tax revenue, and higher crime.

EPA funding will initiate the cleanup of these contaminants and reduce threats to the health and welfare of sensitive populations. Brownfields assessments of critical sites represent a first step in removing pollution and eliminating exposure pathways for Evanston’s most vulnerable residents.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions – A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PLACES analysis of Census Tracts 8092 and 8086 shows that they experience health disparities for adults 18 and over. See summary table (levels higher than national levels shown in red):

Health Indicator	Census Tract 8092	Census Tract 8096	National
Asthma	11.4%	10.1%	9.8%
High blood pressure	34.6%	30.7%	34.4%
Diabetes	13.8%	10.6%	12.0%
Cognitive disability	14.6%	10.7%	13.7%

In addition, CDC estimates the prevalence of fair or poor health among adults aged 18 years and older as 22.9% in Census Tract 8092 and 16.0% in Census Tract 8096, compared to substantially lower statewide and national benchmarks. Census Tract 8092 is also ranked as “high” on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for

Toxic Substances and Disease Registry’s Social Vulnerability Index, with a 0.9628 out of 1 statewide score, indicating heightened environmental and public health stressors.

Local health data further reinforces these findings. According to the Evanston Health and Human Services Department’s [2022-2026 EPLAN](#) community health assessment, Black and Hispanic residents in Census Tract 8092 and 8096 experience the community’s highest burdens of chronic disease (obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes). Asthma emergency room visit rates for Black adults and children from the project area are significantly higher than those of other Evanston residents, suggesting that environmental triggers and exposure pathways are contributing factors. Life expectancy in Census Tract 8092 is 75.5 years, which is the lowest in Evanston.

Legacy industrial uses and abandoned railroad corridors within the Target Area have left behind suspected contamination from hazardous substances and petroleum, which may contribute to these observed health disparities for nearby residents, including sensitive populations such as children, older adults, and individuals with chronic illnesses. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding will help identify, characterize, and reduce these health threats by supporting site assessments that clarify contamination conditions and exposure pathways. Evanston’s Health and Human Services Department will conduct monitoring to assess high incidence rates (especially with sensitive populations) and correlate data to existing brownfields. Brownfield cleanup will help mitigate these risks.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations – Residents of the Target Area (Census Tracts 8092 and 8096) are economically challenged and disproportionately impacted by environmental and health burdens when compared to Illinois and national benchmarks. These Census Tracts experience higher poverty rates and lower median household incomes, limiting residents’ ability to avoid or mitigate exposure to environmental hazards concentrated in their neighborhoods. See summary below (variations from state and/or national levels shown in red):

	Census Tract 8092	Census Tract 8096	Illinois	United States
Poverty Rate	17.3%	5.8%	11.7%	12.4%
Median Household Income	\$51,978	\$71,635	\$81,702	\$78,538

Health outcomes in the Target Area further reflect these inequities. Residents of Census Tracts 8092 and 8096 report significantly higher rates of chronic diseases such as obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes than the Evanston average. Contamination exposure pathways are likely leading to low life expectancy in the project area – 75.5 years in Census Tract 8092 compared to 82 years across Evanston.

EPA Brownfields Assessment funding will help address these disproportionate impacts by identifying, characterizing, and reducing environmental threats that undermine residents’ health and economic stability. Redevelopment of contaminated sites will:

- Reduce environmental pollution that threatens the health and welfare of residents;
- Provide affordable housing options to struggling community members;
- Increase access to recreational amenities for disadvantaged residents with limited green space options;
- Support local businesses and neighborhood-serving economic activity; and
- Improve access to Evanston Township High School, jobs, and other key destinations.

Brownfields cleanup, combined with local and State grants for affordable housing, will provide lower-income residents with opportunities to reduce their living expenses and avoid displacement. Those efforts will ensure that current residents and businesses can continue to thrive without being forced out of the project area by rising costs.

Community Engagement

e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles

Name of organization/ entity/group	Entity’s mission	Point of contact (name & email)	Specific project involvement or assistance provided
Evanston Community Development Department	Enhances neighborhoods, manages affordable housing projects, and supports revitalization.	Sarah Flax, sflax@cityofevanston.org	Project oversight. Work with consultants on assessments and cleanup/reuse plans.
Evanston Health and Human Services Department	Protects, preserves, and promotes wellness for people who live, work, and play in Evanston.	Ike Ogbo, iogbo@cityofevanston.org	Information sharing with residents on the health risks of brownfields.
Five Fifth’s TIF Advisory Committee	Review/recommends TIF for affordable housing, small business grants, and public infrastructure.	Virna Garcia, [REDACTED]	Steering Committee. Support site selection and reuse planning. Encourage residents to participate in engagement activities.

Evanston Latinos	Advocates for the Latino population in Evanston.	Rebeca Mendoza, info@evanstonlatinos.org	Encourage Hispanic residents to participate in engagement activities.
Evanston Chamber of Commerce	Focused on furthering the goals of the Evanston business community.	Brittany Wright, brittany@evchamber.com	Steering Committee. Support site selection and reuse planning. Outreach to businesses.
Evanston Cradle to Career	Helps disadvantaged children and families in Evanston.	Kim Holmes-Ross, kholmesross@evanstonc2c.org	Steering Committee. Support site selection and reuse planning. Encourage residents to participate in community engagement activities.
Gaining Resourceful Opportunities While Working (GROWW)	Works to build job skills and support career advancement for residents of all backgrounds.	Genaro Hernandez, ghernandez@cityofevanston.org	Help residents access brownfields job training.

g. Incorporating Community Input – The City will implement a structured, inclusive, and transparent community engagement process to ensure that residents meaningfully inform brownfields assessment activities and reuse planning throughout the project period. A dedicated Community Engagement Team, led by the City and supported by partners, will develop and implement public involvement strategies. Outreach activities will target residents of Census Tracts 8092 and 8096. The Community Engagement Team will host engagement opportunities over the grant period, including in-person meetings and virtual sessions, to share project information, solicit feedback, and communicate next steps. Meetings will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide childcare to reduce participation barriers. All written materials will be available in English and Spanish.

Community input will be collected through multiple methods, including facilitated discussions at meetings, comment cards, surveys, and online feedback tools. Evanston’s Health and Human Services Department will participate in engagement activities to provide clear, accessible information about brownfield risks, assessment findings, and potential health implications, helping residents make informed contributions.

Importantly, community input will directly inform project decisions, including the identification and prioritization of additional sites, the sequencing of assessment activities, and the development of reuse concepts for assessed properties. All feedback will be documented, summarized, and incorporated into project planning. To ensure transparency and accountability, the City will share meeting summaries and responses to community input through its website, community newsletters, and follow-up communications, closing the feedback loop with participants.

Outreach and information dissemination will use a combination of traditional and digital media, including the Evanston RoundTable, Evanston Now, Evanston Cable Channel 16, City and Ward e-newsletters, local radio stations, social media, and the City’s website. Direct communication with households in the project area will further ensure broad awareness of brownfields activities and engagement opportunities. This approach builds on Evanston’s successful use of similar engagement strategies in prior community development and planning initiatives.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

a. Project Implementation	b. Anticipated Project Schedule	c. Task/Activity Lead	d. Outputs
Task #1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight			
A project manager will ensure compliance with grant requirements. Tasks include oversight, contracting, and performance reporting. Environmental/planning contractors will be procured to conduct assessments and develop cleanup/reuse plans. These services will be solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP)/Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The City will initiate a competitive qualifications-based selection process in compliance with local and federal regulations. Three people will attend EPA’s National Brownfields Training Conference to learn best practices and identify ways to leverage federal resources. Key residential and business leaders will be asked to participate on a Steering Committee. A Community Engagement Team will also be established to encourage resident participation.	Ongoing project management with quarterly reporting and regular Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) updates. Environmental/planning contractors procured during first quarter of Year 1.	Sarah Flax, Community Development Director Cara Pratt, Sustainability & Resilience Manager	Formalized Steering Committee and Community Engagement Team, RFP/RFQs for assessments and cleanup/reuse planning and contracts with qualified professionals, quarterly reports, ACRES updates, and closeout report.

Task #2 – Community Engagement			
City staff will lead the Community Engagement team. Residents will be involved in confirming priority brownfields, determining secondary sites, and recommending reuse options. Evanston will connect with the community through quarterly meetings, newsletters, web sites, social media, and other outreach tools. Evanston will use ATSDR’s Brownfields/Land Revitalization Action Model to foster dialogue.	Quarterly community meetings and ongoing communications.	Cynthia Vargas, Community Engagement & Communications Manager	Community engagement plan, quarterly meetings in neighborhoods, and newsletters/fact sheets.
Task #3 – Site Selection & Access Agreements			
City staff and environmental consultants will work with the Steering Committee to confirm primary brownfields selected for assessments and recommend additional sites in the targeted project area. The project team will negotiate with landowners to secure site access. This permission will enable Evanston to collect sediment, surface water, and groundwater samples; install groundwater monitoring wells; and use equipment, including vehicles and drill rigs.	Primary and secondary site selection will initiate Year 1 and continue through the grant period. Site access negotiations will begin mid-Year 1 and continue into Year 4.	Cara Pratt, Sustainability & Resilience Manager	Inventory of identified brownfields and primary/secondary site recommendations, and site access agreements.
Task #4 – Phase I & Phase II Activities			
Evanston will conduct ~11 Phase I assessments and ~six Phase II assessments in the targeted area. These activities will be conducted by qualified environmental professionals and preceded with approved Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP). Procured environmental contractors will ensure that all Phase I and Phase II activities meet American Society for Testing Materials standards and comply with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule.	Assessment activities will occur over a 42-month period, from the third quarter of Year 1 through Year 4.	Environmental consultants, with support from Cara Pratt (Sustainability & Resilience Manager).	11 Phase I and 6 Phase II assessments, 1 generic QAPP, and 6 site-specific QAPP addenda.
Task #5 – Cleanup & Reuse Planning			
Cleanup/reuse plans will be developed by qualified experts, with significant community input. Proposed activities include: a charrette; development of an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for sites to be remediated; a land use plan that considers cleanup strategies for priority brownfield sites, green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and Complete Streets; and an implementation strategy with business recruitment approaches, identification of public and private revitalization resources, and a land use plan game plan.	Cleanup/reuse planning will occur in Year 3 and 4, unless needed earlier.	Environmental consultants will develop cleanup plans for priority sites. A reuse planning team will also be contracted.	1 charrette, ABCAs for proposed cleanup sites, sustainable land reuse plan; and detailed implementation strategy that includes cleanup priorities and public/private resources that can support revitalization.
Task #6 – Health Monitoring			
Evanston’s Health and Human Services Department will communicate the health risks associated with brownfields and monitor public health in the project area. Health officials will identify and address potentially harmful exposures to residents. Screenings of vulnerable populations will be conducted to determine whether these exposure pathways might have resulted in health impacts.	Public workshops during Year 1, ongoing communication with residents, and health screenings conducted concurrently with Phase II assessments.	Ike Ogbo, Health & Human Services Director	Presentations at quarterly meetings, online/printed materials describing health issues related to brownfields, and health screening reports.

A timeline of project activities is included below:

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cooperative Agreement Oversight	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Site Selection & Access Agreements		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Phase I & Phase II Activities			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Cleanup & Reuse Planning									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

e. Cost Estimates

		Project Tasks						
Direct Costs		Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Community Engagement	Site Selection & Access Agreements	Phase I & Phase II Activities	Cleanup & Reuse Planning	Health Monitoring	Total
	Personnel	\$10,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$4,500	\$30,000
	Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Travel	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,500
	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Contractual	\$0	\$28,000	\$11,500	\$279,000	\$145,000	\$0	\$463,500
	Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total Direct Costs	\$15,000	\$30,500	\$14,000	\$284,000	\$150,000	\$6,500	\$500,000	
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Budget	\$15,000	\$30,500	\$14,000	\$284,000	\$150,000	\$6,500	\$500,000	

The cost estimates presented in the budget above include the following assumptions:

- **Cooperative Agreement Oversight:** Evanston’s Community Development Director (Sarah Flax) will provide cooperative agreement oversight (\$10,000 staff time). The budget allocates \$500 for staff time \$50/hour for 10 hours) to conduct an RFP/RFQ process for environmental and planning contractors to perform assessments and develop cleanup and reuse plans. Travel expenses are budgeted for three people to attend EPA’s National Brownfields Training Conference (\$1,500 per person – \$200 for registration, \$500 for airfare, \$600 for three hotel nights, and \$200 for three days per diem; \$4,500 total).
- **Community Engagement:** City staff (\$50/hour for 50 hours, \$2,500 total) and consultants (\$28,000) will manage the engagement process.
- **Site Selection and Access Agreements:** The budget includes \$1,000 (\$50/hour for 20 hours) in staff time and \$4,000 for contractors to manage the brownfield site selection process. Staff time (\$50/hour for 30 hours) and consultant expenses (\$6,500) are also included in the budget to negotiate site access with willing private property owners.
- **Phase I and Phase II Activities:** Environmental consultants will conduct ~11 Phase I assessments (\$4,500 each, \$54,000 total) and ~six Phase II assessments (\$37,500 each, \$225,000 total). City staff (\$50/hour for 100 hours, \$5,000 total) will oversee the assessment process.
- **Cleanup/Reuse Planning:** Environmental consultants will develop cleanup plans for sites targeted for remediation. A planning team will also be contracted to help determine site reuse. The budget includes \$145,000 for cleanup/reuse plan contracting, as well as \$5,000 (\$50/hour for 100 hours) for city staff time.
- **Health Monitoring:** Staff time (\$50/hour for 90 hours, \$4,500 total) for Evanston’s Health and Human Services Department is allocated to conduct health monitoring activities in the project area. The budget also includes \$2,000 to design and print health materials.

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results – Evanston will measure and evaluate environmental progress and results using a structured, outcome-oriented performance framework tied directly to the EPA-approved work plan. Results will be tracked through clearly defined outputs, outcomes, and milestones, ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the grant period.

Key project outputs will include 11 Phase I environmental assessments, six Phase II environmental assessments, and related planning documents completed for priority brownfields. Additional outputs may include acres assessed, properties screened for contamination, and sites evaluated for cleanup and reuse potential. These outputs will be compared against the approved work plan schedule to ensure timely completion.

Outcomes will be evaluated based on the degree to which assessment activities reduce environmental uncertainty and support informed decision-making. Outcomes will include identification and characterization of contaminants, clarification of potential exposure pathways, determination of sites suitable for cleanup or reuse, and preparation of sites for future remediation and redevelopment. Progress toward reuse readiness will be tracked as sites move from unknown environmental conditions to defined cleanup pathways. The project is expected to prepare 20+ acres of

brownfields for remediation and reuse, create 75-100 short-term assessment/cleanup/construction jobs and 20 long-term jobs, and leverage \$30 million in private and public investment.

The City's project manager will conduct regular internal reviews to evaluate progress against established milestones and performance measures. Internal project management software will be used to monitor schedules, deliverables, and corrective actions, while ensuring that grant funds are expended efficiently and in accordance with EPA requirements. All required data will be entered into ACRES on a regular basis.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability

a. Organizational Capacity – Evanston has the necessary staff expertise to manage the project effectively. The City has successfully administered federally-funded projects, including State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan, as well as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership entitlement grant funds, among other resources. This track record indicates not only compliance with all programmatic standards but also efficiency in administrative and financial management. Evanston has consistently met all associated requirements and expectations, ensuring these funds are utilized effectively to support community development and enhance the well-being of its residents. Through this extensive experience, the City has built a solid foundation of knowledge and best practices that will contribute to the successful management of this project.

A project manager will lead all project teams and be invested with the authority necessary to complete the project. Project management duties will be assigned to Sarah Flax, Evanston's Community Development Director. She will serve as a liaison between EPA Region 5 and the community and will be responsible for assuring compliance with the administrative and reporting requirements of the cooperative agreement. Evanston's Finance/Accounting Division will be responsible for compliance with the grant's financial requirements.

Representatives from the Five Fifth's TIF Advisory Committee, Evanston Chamber of Commerce, and Evanston Cradle to Career will serve on a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will meet regularly (initially and then quarterly), helping to select brownfield sites, support community engagement, and participate in reuse planning.

A Community Engagement Team will implement strategies to involve disadvantaged residents in Census Tracts 8092 and 8096. This team will be composed of members of various municipal departments, as well as members of community associations, the business community, education sector, nonprofit field, and other stakeholders.

b. Organizational Structure – Evanston has a long track record of successfully managing community projects. The development of a detailed work plan with clear milestones and responsibilities is critical to this effort. This will be developed at an initial meeting with the City Manager and other key staff. Project goals will be identified, and responsibilities within the work plan will be defined. Performance measures will help to track progress. To ensure that the project remains on schedule, status updates will be incorporated into Evanston's existing reporting structure. Monthly reports will be provided to the City Manager. In addition, staff will meet regularly with key partners.

Evanston will follow all EPA Brownfields funding requirements. Administratively, the City is experienced managing grant-supported work. Evanston has established clear guidelines for timely reporting of financial and programmatic information to funding agencies. Local systems are in place to track reporting deadlines and ensure submissions are made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award. Evanston's Finance/Accounting Division also has effective internal controls over the use and distribution of federal grant funds. The Finance/Accounting team will maintain accurate, current, and complete records identifying the source and application of EPA-funded activities.

c. Description of Key Staff – Evanston will use a team approach to ensure the project is not dependent on a few key people. Sarah Flax, Evanston's Community Development Director, will oversee the project. Sarah has 19+ years of local government experience and has managed state and federal funding. She will assure compliance with all requirements of the cooperative agreement. Sarah will be assisted by qualified interdepartmental staff, including Cara Pratt (Sustainability and Resilience Manager), Cynthia Vargas (Community Engagement and Communications Manager), and Ike Ogbo (Health and Human Services Director). Cara joined the city in 2021 to execute Evanston's environmental goals. She will provide day-to-day project support. Cynthia has over 18 years of communications and community engagement experience in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Fluent in Spanish, she has conducted numerous engagement activities in Evanston to make marginalized residents feel more connected to their community. Ike has served as a local health professional in Evanston since 2008. He manages Evanston's Health and Human Services Department of over 40 permanent and temporary employees, advancing public health and safety in the community. He will manage the project's health monitoring activities.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources – Evanston will hire qualified experts to support engagement activities, conduct

assessments, and develop cleanup/reuse plans. Evanston has established procedures that staff will follow in selecting consultants. These services will be procured in compliance with EPA regulations and 2 CFR Part 200. Specifically, the City will: not seek contractor assistance for RFP/RFQ preparation; avoid language that limits competition or benefits a specific contractor; consider price in proposal evaluations; use weighted selection factors; publicly advertise the RFP/RFQ on the Evanston web site and other online forums; and document the selection rationale if the chosen contractor is not the lowest bidder.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will provide technical assistance. City staff will work with prospective purchasers to enroll sites in the State's voluntary Site Remediation Program. Evanston's Health and Human Services Department will communicate the health risks associated with brownfields. Health professionals will provide technical assistance, identify sensitive populations, and ensure that cleanup reduces exposure pathways. Evanston will also continue to coordinate with EPA technical assistance provider Kansas State University, which provided critical input on this grant application.

Evanston will promote the project to local contractors. EPA investment will support efforts to create jobs and promote upward economic mobility. Evanston's GROWW workforce development program will help unemployed and underemployed neighborhood residents gain access to brownfields job training and connect with assessment activities.

Past Performance and Accomplishments

f. Has Not Received EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal/Non-Federal Assistance Agreements

1. Purpose and Accomplishments – Evanston has never received EPA Brownfields funding. However, the community has secured federal and state resources to support local revitalization, including:

- In 2021, Evanston received \$43.2 million of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to replace lost public sector revenue and support the community's recovery from COVID-19. The funding helped rebuild City staff capacity, supported the recovery of local businesses and nonprofit service providers, funded food/health services, and assisted renters and homeowners with rent and mortgage payments. Key accomplishments included the redevelopment of a vacant warehouse into a community hub of wellness, food, and creative enterprises, a new home for Northlight Theatre in downtown Evanston, and a "living room" as an alternative to calling 911 or visiting the emergency room for people experiencing mental health crises.
- In 2010, Evanston received an \$18.5 million Neighborhood Revitalization Program grant to acquire and rehab foreclosed and vacant housing in two neighborhoods hardest hit by the mortgage foreclosure crisis. This funding helped the City acquire 101 units of foreclosed/vacant housing and return them to productive use as ownership and rental housing for low- and middle-income households. Evanston also used the grant to construct a 32-unit mixed-income New Urbanist housing development.
- Evanston has received HUD CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership entitlement grant funds since the inception of those programs. The City provides housing and expands economic opportunities for people of low and moderate incomes with these funds. A recent transformative project includes a 60-unit development for low-income seniors.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements – Evanston has a strong and well-documented record of compliance with the work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions of grant agreements, including funding administered by Illinois state agencies, HUD, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. For each grant, the City developed agency-approved work plans that clearly defined tasks, milestones, and deliverables, and these work plans were implemented as approved. Projects were managed to ensure activities were completed in accordance with established schedules. Milestones were met on time, and when minor adjustments were required, they were promptly coordinated with the relevant agency and formally documented. Evanston has a consistent history of submitting timely quarterly and final performance reports, financial reports, and required grant deliverables in accordance with grant terms and conditions.

The City has demonstrated responsible financial management across its grant portfolio. Grant funds were expended only on eligible activities, tracked through established financial controls, and monitored to ensure expenditures aligned with approved budgets. Projects were completed on budget, and all applicable administrative, programmatic, and cross-cutting federal requirements were met. Where required, progress toward achieving expected results was documented and reported in a timely manner.

Evanston's grant-funded projects have achieved their intended outcomes, as demonstrated by examples identified above. This consistent performance reflects the City's internal systems for grant oversight, compliance monitoring, and coordination among programmatic, financial, and reporting staff. As a result, Evanston is well-positioned to manage and comply with the work plan, schedule, reporting, and administrative requirements of an EPA Brownfields grant.

Threshold Criteria Responses

City of Evanston, Illinois

1) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- a. The City of Evanston is a unit of local government, and a political subdivision under the laws of the State of Illinois. The City is eligible to receive EPA Brownfields funding.
- b. The City of Evanston is exempt from federal taxation. Section 501(c)(4) does not pertain to local governments. The City is not registered to lobby the federal government.

2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A Community Engagement Team will develop public involvement strategies. This team will organize quarterly meetings over the project period, including virtual sessions. Outreach activities will target residents of disadvantaged Census Tracts 8092 and 8096, particularly underrepresented populations. The engagement aims to share information, collect feedback, and describe next steps. Input will also be gathered to shape reuse of assessed properties. Evanston's Health and Human Services Department will share information on brownfield risks. Engagement activities will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide childcare to maximize participation. Comment cards will be provided at meetings to capture and document input.

Traditional media, including the Evanston RoundTable and Evanston Now online newspapers, Evanston Cable Channel 16, City and Ward e-newsletters, and local radio stations, will be used to disseminate information. Websites and social media will describe brownfields efforts and promote engagement opportunities. A survey tool will be used to gather feedback. Evanston will also regularly communicate with households in the project area through community newsletters. All written outreach materials will be available in English and Spanish. Evanston has used this outreach process successfully with previous community development projects.

3) EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS

The City of Evanston has not received previous EPA Brownfields funding.

4) CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS

Not applicable. Evanston has not procured any contractors or identified any subrecipients for EPA grant funds. The City will follow the federal fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 when contracting with environmental and planning specialists.